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ABSTRACT

This booklet, which is intended for individuals responsible for organizing student placements in work experience programs in Australia, provides an overview of the basic issues regarding work experience programs. The following are among the topics discussed in the 14 sections: (1) understanding the characteristics and purposes of industry placements (general work experience placements, vocational placements); (2) reviewing research findings; (3) identifying needs and objectives (identifying needs, setting objectives, describing goals and objectives); (4) planning placements (deciding who will be involved, fulfilling legal and insurance obligations, developing budgets, involving employers in planning placements, catering to students with special medical conditions); (5) clarifying student and employer expectations; (6) organizing placements (exploring student preferences, resources and information sessions; (7) arranging placements (school- versus student-negotiated placements); (8) communicating information (informing employers, students, parents, other teachers, and nonparticipating students); (9) preparing for placements (preparing students, workplace supervisors, teachers, and coordinators and conducting workshops for teachers and coordinators); (10) implementing training; (11) monitoring student performance (visiting students in the workplace, assessing student performance, conducting observations); (12) reporting on student performance; (13) conducting follow-up activities; and (14) evaluating placements (major and minor evaluations). Concluding the booklet are a summary and 24-item annotated bibliography. (MN)

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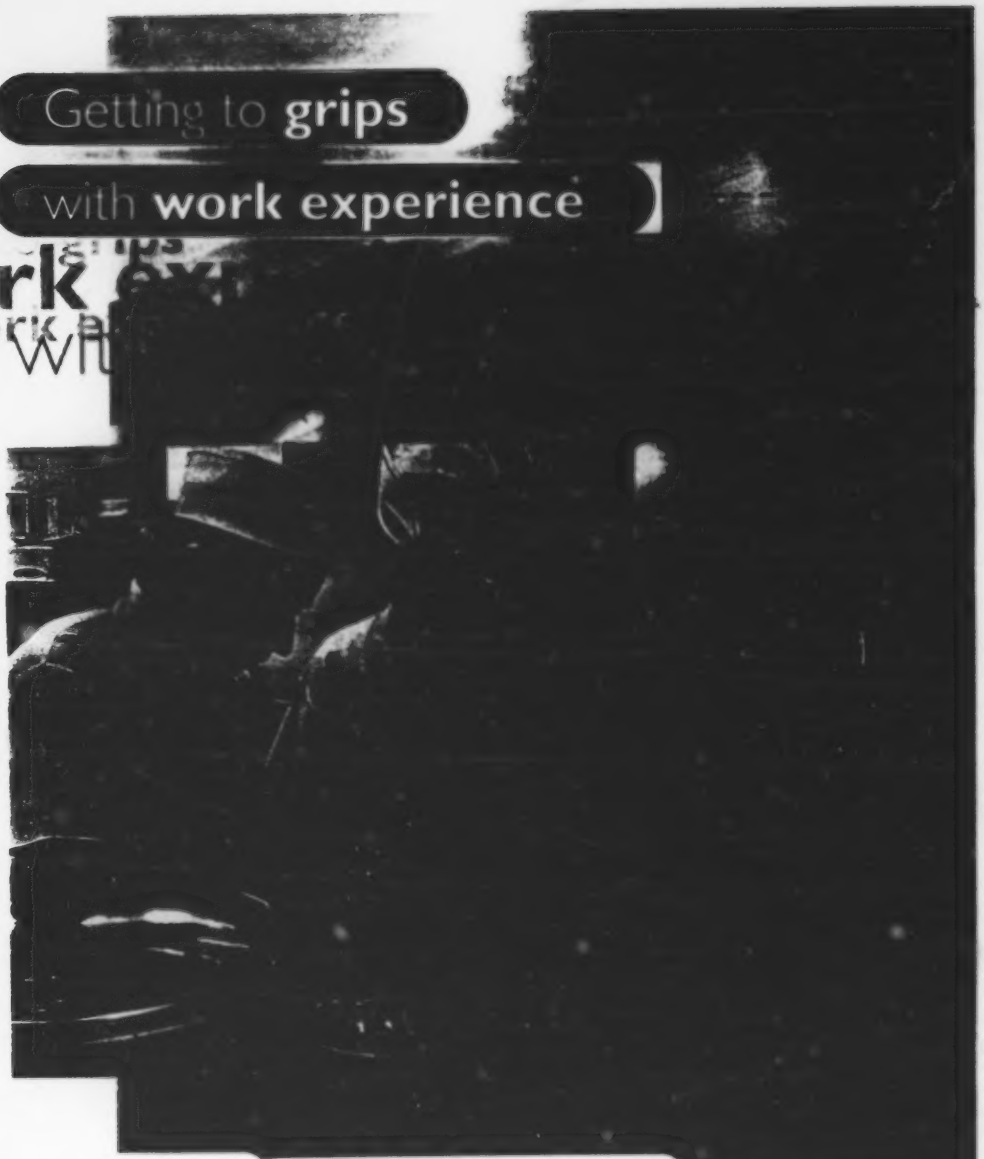

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Getting to **grips** with **work experience**

Josie Misko

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Contents

Introduction 1

What are industry placements? 2

What the research says 3

Identifying needs and objectives 5

Planning the placements 8

Expectations 11

Organising the placements 13

Arranging the placements 14

Communicating information 16

Preparing for placements 23

Implementing the training 26

Monitoring student performance 27

Reporting on student performance 29

Follow-up activities 33

Evaluating the placements 34

Summary 40

References and annotated bibliography 41

Introduction

It is generally agreed that during their teenage years students should begin to experience what it is like to go to work. Apart from helping them to develop maturity and responsibility, this experience is thought to benefit students when they eventually enter the workplace once their schooling is over.

Another push for providing such experience for students comes from government training reforms. These reforms have been devised to help improve the competitiveness of Australian industry in the global market by bolstering the skill levels of the Australian workforce. As a result there has been an increase in general work experience and industry-specific vocational programs for students in government and non-government secondary schools.

These programs include industry placements which require students to go into the workplace to learn about or practise specific occupational skills and to learn about the world of work. This booklet provides guidelines to assist those responsible for organising industry placements for students. These guidelines are based, in part, on the findings of recent surveys of students, employers, and teachers.

What are industry placements?

There are two forms of industry placement. These are general work experience placements and vocational placements.

General work experience placements

When we talk about general work experience placements, we mean those placements that are available to all students whatever courses they are undertaking at school. Typically students are allocated a week or two weeks during the school year to attend a workplace of their choice. The aim of the placement is to experience what it is like to be at work and to observe and learn about an industry or occupation.

The format of the placement may be highly structured or left to the discretion of employers. Placements with a highly structured format would spell out in detail the objectives of the placement, the activities to be undertaken, and the evaluation process to be adopted. Placements with a flexible format are less specific in providing details on what is required. Employers generally prefer a structured placement so that they know exactly what it is that schools want the students to see or do while they are in the workplace. It also means that the employer does not have to generate activities to keep students busy.

Work experience placements may take place during the school term or during school holidays. In some cases students are left to organise their own placements; in others teachers do it for them.

Vocational placements

These placements are integral to an accredited course, in which students are expected to develop specific skills in the workplace and on which they are assessed. The placement is highly structured and industry specific. Formal assessment is conducted and performance is recorded in a log book or record book. Typically such placements are arranged with selected employers, by teachers or vocational placement co-ordinators.

What the research says

Almost all students in Australian schools have been involved in some form of work experience since the 1960s. This is the case for students in government and non-government schools (Ainley & Fleming 1995).

In 1988 a review of work experience in Victoria found that work experience allowed students to find out more about themselves, how they related to work and whether they should continue with their education. The programs were found to help schools to develop stronger links with their communities. The nature of the costs that employers were required to meet in terms of time, and administrative expenses were also highlighted (Ministerial Review of Work Experience Committee 1988).

Case studies conducted in Tasmania and Western Australia found that students were able to develop a more realistic understanding of the world of work and the skills they required for the occupations of their choice. They also showed that schools would be best served by having alliances with a small group of employers, so that less time and effort was devoted to searching for appropriate placements or training employers in what was expected in the programs (Straton & Murray 1984).

A study of students from secondary schools and TAFE colleges found that students were generally well satisfied with their work experience. It allowed them to demonstrate and develop good work habits, skills in co-operating with others, self-esteem, honesty, and persistence. However, their experience in the workplace had little effect on improving cognitive skills (Evans & Poole 1992).

In 1995 a review of the Australian Vocational Training System pilot programs found that employers were generally in favour of providing placements for vocational students in their companies. It provided them with an opportunity to recruit new employees, and develop the supervisory skills of employees entrusted with the training of students. It also allowed them to fulfil their obligations to the community by helping young people prepare for the workforce. This in turn helped them to promote and market their companies to the local community (DEET 1995).

Case studies of six schools involved in work experience and vocational placement programs in 1997 found that structured placements are preferred by employers because they feel that these allow them to plan and organise placements better, and provide opportunities for skill development. Employers also prefer students to be in the workplace for an extended period so the students can establish meaningful relationships in the workplace and experience a broad range of tasks and activities. Students

believe that this helps them to access part-time and full-time work. Teachers value the skills and knowledge students acquire during their time in the workplace (Cumming & Carbine 1997).

In 1998 a study of students in vocational placements and general work experience programs conducted by NCVER (Misko 1998) in five Australian States found that almost all students believe their time in the workplace was fulfilling and enjoyable. Very few students said they had learnt nothing new or that the experience had been a waste of time. The study also found that employers believe that involvement in such programs allows them to fulfil their obligations to help young people to find work in their communities. This in turn promotes a positive image of the company. Providing work experience or vocational placements for schools also allows them to recruit new employees if students show promise during their time in the company.

This study also found that the most frequently reported essential attributes employers look for in students are courtesy, willingness to learn, co-operation, punctuality, ability to learn, responsiveness, and self-discipline. Less frequently reported, but still identified as essential, are reading skills and initiative. It is interesting to note that employers were *not* generally looking for numeracy, mathematics, written language, or computer skills as essential qualities in students coming into their workplaces.

Identifying needs and objectives

Identifying needs

The first phase of any program is to decide whether there is a real need for the program. Once this need has been established it is necessary to determine exactly what else is required in terms of resources and time. This can be achieved through a needs assessment process.

Teachers responsible for the overall organisation of work experience for the different year levels, and individuals responsible for co-ordinating vocational placements for each subject area are best placed to conduct the needs assessment. In deciding on the need for placements, they will need to refer to curriculum documents for the different year levels and course outlines for specific courses, and hold consultations with year level teachers. In some cases there will be a school policy for students of a particular year level to be engaged in some form of work experience. In such cases the need for providing these experiences for students has already been established.

Setting objectives

The next task is to establish the goals and specific objectives for the program. These can help employers develop the tasks that will be done at the workplace, and provide information to students and their parents about what is to be expected of the student. They can also be used to guide the development of assessment tasks.

When we set objectives for general work experience or specific vocational placements we are guided by the objectives of the course requiring the experience. In a general work experience placement—not attached to any particular course— these objectives will focus on experiencing and understanding the work environment, developing some appreciation of the industry involved and practising essential work routines. Vocational placements will have more specific objectives taken from the curriculum.

Whatever the nature of the placement the objectives need to be well-defined, clearly written and feasible. They need to be written in language that can be easily communicated to employers, students and parents.

Describing goals and objectives

We have already determined that goals and objectives need to be written in a manner that is straightforward and can be easily understood by employers and students. This ensures that the training that is provided is appropriate, and provides a guideline for assessment and report writing. Although the school will have specific goals and objectives for the placements which are

derived from the curriculum, or from the school policy for work experience, there is room for employers to be involved in determining how these objectives are to be achieved and evaluated.

An example of some goals and objectives for a work experience student who is going into a chocolate factory to learn about being a confectioner, or a student who is in an accredited commercial cookery course and needs to learn skills in making chocolate, is provided below.

Sample goals and objectives

Main goals:

For students to:

1. develop appropriate work habits
2. improve their understanding of the production of confectionery products
3. produce at least one item made of chocolate

1. Developing appropriate work habits

Objectives:

1. The student will arrive on time for work.
2. The student will arrive on time for work after tea breaks.
3. The student will be courteous in interactions with superiors.
4. The student will be courteous in interactions with workmates.
5. The student will co-operate in setting up equipment.
6. The student will co-operate in putting equipment away.

2. Improving the students' understanding of the production of confectionery products

Objectives:

1. The student will receive information on the various ingredients used in making chocolate products.
2. The student will be given an overview of each of the different stages involved in making a chocolate product.
3. The student will be given an overview of all the machinery and equipment used in making the chocolate product.
4. The student will be given an overview of all the different occupations involved in getting a chocolate product manufactured and distributed to retailers or wholesalers.

3. Learning the skills for producing a chocolate product

Objectives:

1. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to set up the equipment required for making a chocolate basket.
2. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to prepare the chocolate to the right consistency.
3. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to tell when the chocolate is ready for pouring into moulds.
4. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to pour the chocolate into the moulds.
5. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to remove the chocolate from the moulds.
6. The student will receive instruction demonstrating how to present the product in a wrapping or in a presentation box.

4. Practising the skills required for producing a chocolate product

Objectives:

On at least three occasions the student will practise:

1. setting up the equipment required for making a chocolate basket
2. preparing the chocolate required to the right consistency and temperature
3. pouring the chocolate into the moulds
4. removing the chocolate product from the moulds
5. presenting the chocolate product in a wrapper or a presentation box

This example is specific in detailing the learning outcomes for the student. It may not always be necessary to provide this level of detail. However, when employers know that a lot of planning has gone into the setting up of the placement, and have specific guidelines to follow, they are in a better position to provide the training required. It also presents an image of an organised approach that we want to create in employers' minds.

Planning the placements

Deciding who will be involved

The next step is to decide on who will be involved in the placements. Decisions need to be made about which students, teachers and employers will be involved. It also means identifying the number of employers required and the number of teachers needed to monitor the placements once students are in workplaces. A process for dealing with students who do not attend placements must also be established.

Fulfilling legal and insurance obligations

Legal requirements must be satisfied. This means obtaining the required forms and ensuring that these are signed by parents. It is also important to ensure that the school has the necessary insurances. In some States students may be covered by WorkCover arrangements if they are given some payment for the placement.

Deciding when to hold placements

Now decisions need to be made about when students will go into workplaces and how this time will be arranged. This means making decisions on whether students will attend the workplace for blocks of continuous time (weekly or fortnightly blocks), or whether students should attend the workplace for one day a week over a term or semester.

When deciding on how blocks of time should be allocated in placements we must consider the types of skills to be learnt and the type of experience that is to be gained from the placement. Having students attend the workplace for one day a week may help students keep abreast of their other schoolwork and not require them to catch up on large amounts of work when they return to school. However, it may be more beneficial for both students and employers if the placement covers an extended period. In this situation students will appreciate what it is like to complete workplace projects or tasks they have started. They will also get a more comprehensive feel for life in the workforce with its regular routines and obligations. Furthermore, employers will be better able to integrate students into the work of the company if they do not have to rely on other workers to complete work that has been commenced by students.

In some schools vocational placements for some students are scheduled to occur at times when other students are doing non-academic activities such as sports or electives. Although this overcomes the problem of students missing out on their academic work in other subjects, students may find it unfair to miss out on school-based activities that are considered to be more

fun. It also sends students the message that vocational placements are not part of the regular timetable and are not considered to be part of the mainstream curriculum.

Developing budgets

It is important to develop a budget to implement the process. A budget for a placement program will include salaries for teaching and support staff. This will be based on the number of days required to plan for the placements, counsel students, provide school-based training, negotiate placements with employers, prepare information sheets and assessment materials, visit students in placements, provide follow-up activities, and evaluate programs. It will also include funds to cover expenses incurred by teachers in travelling to workplaces and supplies such as books, paper and printing, and furniture and equipment. Where students are undertaking work experience and vocational placements in enterprises which require them to live away from home, funds for teacher accommodation will also have to be factored into the budget.

Involving employers in planning the placements

The effectiveness of any placement will be improved if employers have had a role in planning the student's experience. Teachers and co-ordinators should make arrangements to meet with employers to discuss how best to provide the required training or experience well before the placements are to take place. When employers have been involved in the planning process, they are in a better position to ensure that appropriate activities are provided. They are also more likely to have a commitment to seeing that the placement is successful.

We have already discussed the importance for schools to have written guidelines on exactly what they want the placement to achieve. These lists should be used in initial discussions between teachers and employers about how employers can help students to obtain workplace skills and experience.

Having written objectives and activities to be undertaken will make it easier for employers to provide copies to other employees who will be involved in the training. Because these workers play an integral part in the student's learning it is important to have them briefed about what will be expected of students. In this way they will get work satisfaction from the knowledge that they have played an important part in the training of the student and will be more accepting of their role in the training of future students.

Catering for students with special medical conditions

Employers need to have details of the special needs of the students who will be coming to work in their companies because workplaces can be hazardous places. A student who suffers from asthma, for example, would not be well placed in a dusty environment and may be better placed in a part of the company where there is minimal dust. A student who has problems with hearing may not be well placed on a busy building site where awareness of sounds is especially important. In this case the employer may want to place the student in a part of the company where this physical ability is not so crucial.

Expectations

Student expectations

We should discover what students expect from a placement before sending them out into workplaces. The Misko (1998) study found that students have a variety of expectations. They want to improve their understanding of what it is like to be at work, to find out if the job they have selected is a long-term option and to learn more about the sorts of skills that are required. They also want an opportunity to work with others, experience responsibility and become better informed about available career choices. In terms of learning more about themselves students want to be able to better experience their employment potential, and increase their level of confidence. Some students would also like placements to help them to make decisions about possible university or TAFE courses, subject choices for the following academic year, and the types of traineeships or apprenticeships they would like to do in the future. When we know what students expect from the placements we are in a better position to assist them to approach employers who are best able to deliver the training or experiences required.

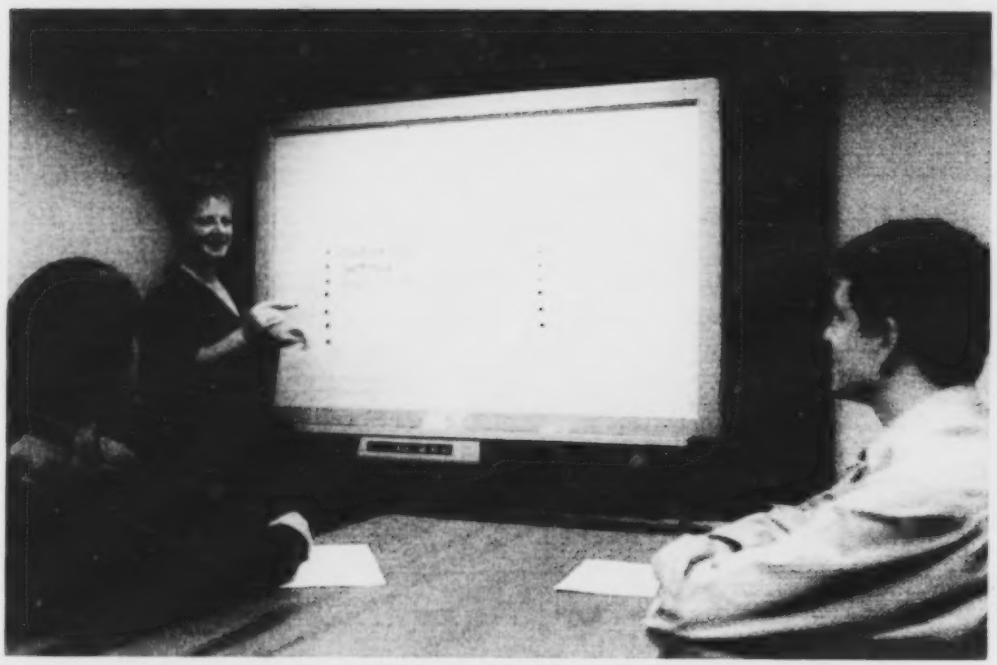
We must also keep in mind that there may be students (especially the younger ones) who will not know what to expect from a work placement. Some may not be aware of what is reasonable to expect from a work placement. One way to have these types of students think about work placement expectations is for teachers to brainstorm with them the types of things they believe happen in workplaces, and from here generate a list of expectations. If a teacher is doing this with a whole class, these lists can be written up on the blackboard. Once a general list has been devised the next step is for individual students to generate a list of their own expectations. These can then be discussed and where possible incorporated in the student's placement program.

What employers expect from students

Teachers and students should understand the qualities employers look for in students in placements. Misko (1998) found that the most frequently reported essential attributes employers looked for in students were courtesy, willingness to learn, co-operation, punctuality, ability to learn, responsiveness, and self-discipline. Less frequently reported but still identified as essential are reading skills and initiative.

When dealing with students coming in to their workplaces for work experience or vocational placements, employers did not generally look for numeracy, mathematics, written language, or computer skills as essential qualities.

Understanding that employers expect students to display certain qualities and not others can help us to devise pre-training activities which focus on helping students to develop or become aware of these essential qualities. Knowing that these qualities relate more to having the right attitude to work and to working with others means that this training can focus on helping students to understand the importance of displaying these attributes when they are in the workplace.



Organising the placements

Exploring what students want to do

Once a school or other training centre has decided that students will be spending some time in the workplace it is important to explore what students want to do. The first task is to decide what careers are of interest to them. This means asking students about their likes and dislikes, their goals for the future, and their preferences for becoming a specialist or a generalist and then providing students with an indication of the occupations that should suit them.

Students cannot be expected to decide what they would like to do for their industry placement without having some idea of the different occupations or industries that are available. They can explore these options by reading or learning about different occupations and discussing options with career counsellors, other students or with parents. Discussions with career counsellors can be on a one-on-one basis. Discussions with class mates can be in group discussions. Students can be encouraged to discuss options with parents.

Resources and information sessions

One resource that can also be used is the job guide booklet published by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. This provides information on the various occupations, and the training that is required. The recruitment or situations vacant pages of national, regional and community newspapers are also useful resources.

These can give students some idea of current jobs available and qualities that employers are looking for. Alternatively industry information sessions can be held at the school at the beginning of each year. Here representatives from trades and the professions would be invited and major industries would be asked to give a brief presentation of the industries and occupations they represent.

Arranging the placements

Once students have been given an opportunity to decide which occupations or industries are of interest to them it is time to help them set up their placements. There are two main approaches used to place students. The first is for the school to find the placement. The second is for the student to find the placement. When the school takes responsibility for finding placements, individuals responsible for courses or placements or vocational co-ordinators approach employers and negotiate the placements and then allocate interested students to these placements. When students take responsibility for finding their own placements, they may use a 'cold-calling' approach to employers either by telephone or by visiting the workplace. They may also wish to use the social networks of their friends and relatives. In all cases there is the need for the school to be involved in vetting the placement to ensure that it is able to meet occupational health and safety requirements and equal educational opportunity needs.

Schools negotiating placements

Teachers and vocational co-ordinators may want to find, negotiate and allocate placements for students in vocational placements. This is because it is especially important for students to be in workplaces with the expertise, skills and resources to be able to provide training and assessment in industry-specific skills.

The advantages of teachers searching for and allocating the placements is that it takes them out of the classroom and into the workplace. This gives them a better opportunity to talk with employers and discuss with them the requirements of the program. They are also able to experience first hand what the workplaces are like and whether or not they will be able to meet the objectives of the placement program. Because students are assessed on their ability to perform specific skills it is important that teachers be able to discuss these assessments with employers.

Students negotiating placements

Where students are required to set up or negotiate their own placements they must develop the skills they will require to search for a placement, write applications, prepare resumés and perform at an interview for the placement. This will include learning about effective presentation and telephone skills. It will include learning about the importance of preparing a professional looking application and dressing appropriately. It will also include learning about the importance of following up messages and being punctual.

The advantages of students setting up their own placements is that it introduces them to the job search process and to the skills required to approach employers, write applications, and attend interviews. It may also help them develop persistence in looking for employment when they are not accepted for positions. Encouraging students to use their own networks also introduces them to the way the real world works. However it is important that students have responsibility for making all the necessary arrangements once the contacts have been made through these networks.

Communicating information

Once the objectives for the placement program have been set and placements have been negotiated it is important to devise a strategy for communicating these plans to employers, parents and students. Employers need to be informed of final arrangements in order to schedule appropriate times for training and allocate students to work areas. Students need to know where they will be going, what they will need to take with them, and the specific objectives they will be expected to achieve. Parents need to be kept informed of what students will be doing, where they will be going, and when they are expected to be there.

A simple method for providing this information to employers, students and parents is to use a written information sheet. This information can be distributed to employers when the placements are being negotiated. It provides a structure for discussion of what is expected. The information sheet for students can be distributed during classes specifically set aside to discuss placements. Where schools prefer a one-on-one approach, these can be given out by teachers or careers counsellors in interviews with individual students. Information sheets for parents can be sent home via their children.

The employer information sheet

An information sheet for employers will include: the name and year level of the student, the date and times of the placement, the subjects that the student is undertaking, any special dietary, physical or health problems that the employer must be aware of, and the specific list of objectives that need to be satisfied, fees, and information on insurance cover. Sample evaluation and assessment items should also be included. A pro-forma for this information sheet is presented below.

Evergreen High School – Employer Information Sheet

Dear Employer

Sally Smith will be attending *Chocolate Box Confectionery Company* from *5 May to 10 May for general work experience*. The purpose of this work experience is for the student to become familiar with the occupation of *confectioner*. She will be expected to observe tasks and to assist *confectioners* in activities that she has learnt to do. She will also be expected to produce a chocolate product from start to finish.

Student details

This student is *16 years of age. She is currently in year 11. She is taking English, Maths, Accounting, General Science and Hospitality. She has requested that we inform you that she will require time during the day to take her medication.*

Times and dress

We understand that work at your company commences at 8.00 am and finishes at 4.30 pm and that workers, including students, are expected to be punctual at all times. Should there be some problem because of illness or other unforeseen problem students are required to inform the personnel officer of these problems as soon as possible.

We also understand that students will be expected to wear *appropriate footwear (flat heeled closed shoes with rubber soles) and non-restrictive clothing. A uniform will be provided for students to wear when they are in the factory.*

Fees and insurance cover

Fee = $.... (where appropriate)

Insurance cover: XYZ Insurance, Policy No.....

Goals and objectives of the program

The objectives of the program are for students to experience an occupation of their choice. This means that they will be expected to learn about the tasks that are involved on a daily basis as well as tasks that are done less regularly.

For this particular placement we expect that the student will:

- learn about the industry and the company. This can be done either through a tour of the company, or discussions with workplace supervisors

- learn the routines of the workplace. This includes coming to work on time in the morning and at the end of breaks. It also includes wearing appropriate dress or uniform
- help setting up the equipment and materials for the day's work
- help cleaning up and putting away the equipment at the end of the day
- be taught how to carry out a particular task related to the occupation and be responsible for that task for the remainder of the placement
- co-operate with other members of the work team
- have a positive attitude in the carrying out of tasks and responsibilities
- *develop the skills required to produce 10 chocolate baskets from start to finish*

Evaluation

Sally will be evaluated on the following aspects:

- punctuality
- dress
- co-operation with workmates and superiors
- responsibility
- willingness to learn
- cleanliness
- suitability for the industry
- production of chocolate baskets
- preparation of materials and moulds for making chocolate baskets
- preparing the chocolate
- pouring the chocolate into moulds
- removing basket from mould
- presenting basket in wrapping or presentation box
- cleaning up and storing materials and equipment after production

Contact details: Please feel free to contact the school with any queries.

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Student information sheet

Where students are involved in specific skill development these skills need to be spelled out. A student information sheet will include: the name of the employer, the type of industry, the objectives and tasks to be accomplished, some tips on presentation, dress, punctuality, and right attitude. Also included will be sample evaluation items. Schools might consider actually attaching the evaluation form to this information sheet.

Evergreen High School – Student Information Sheet

Dear Student

You will be attending *Chocolate Box Confectionery Company* from *5 May to 10 May for general work experience*. The purpose of this work experience is for you to become familiar with the occupation of *confectioner*. You will be expected to observe tasks and to assist *confectioners* in activities that you have learnt. You will also be expected to produce some chocolate items.

Company address

This company is situated at *25517 Chocolate Box Lane, North Lakes*. On the first day you are to go to the personnel office at the entrance of the building. From there you will be shown where to go for your placement.

Times and dress

Work commences at 8.00 am and finishes at 4.30 pm. You will be expected to be punctual at all times. Should there be some problem because of illness or other unforeseen problem please inform the company's personnel officer as soon as possible.

You will also be expected to wear *appropriate footwear (flat heeled closed shoes with rubber soles) and clothing which will allow you to move about freely. You will also be given a uniform to wear when you are in the factory.*

Some useful tips

When you are in the workplace you must remember that supervisors and other workers will be interested to see how you are going and how you fit in to their organisation. The impressions they get from your actions will influence whether or not they believe that you will be suitable for their industry. It will also affect the evaluation you are given.

Remember to always be courteous and pleasant and to show that you are willing to learn. Do not be rude or curt, otherwise people may feel that you are not really interested in being there. Always be prepared to help out when required. This is especially important when people are either setting up equipment or putting it away. Always listen to instructions.

If you are unclear about something, ask for it to be explained again. Be careful to listen carefully the second time it is explained to you. Write things down so that you can better remember what to do. It will also give you something to refer to should you get stuck.

Always get to work on time and always be quick to return from your breaks. Don't be the first to leave at home time. Wear clean clothes and look as if you are ready for work. Don't pretend that you know things when you are not completely sure. No one appreciates a know-it-all.

Good luck.

Evaluation and assessment

You will be evaluated on the following aspects:

- punctuality
- dress
- co-operation
- responsibility
- willingness to learn
- cleanliness
- suitability for the industry
- ability to produce a chocolate product

Contact details

Should you have any further queries or concerns please feel free to contact the school or the personnel officer at the company.

Personnel officer – tel: e-mail:

Career counsellor – tel: e-mail:

Parent information sheet

A parent information sheet should include a preamble on the general purposes of providing students with industry experience. It will then detail the time and place of the placement and the specific objectives that guide the tasks that the students will be asked to undertake.

Evergreen High School – Parent Information Sheet

Dear Parent

Your child *Sally Smith* will be attending *Chocolate Box Confectionary Company* from *5 May to 10 May for general work experience*. The purpose of this work experience is for your child to become familiar with the occupation of *confectioner*. She will be expected to observe tasks and to assist *confectioners* in activities that she has learnt to do.

Company address

This company is situated at *25517 Chocolate Box Lane, North Lakes*. On the first day *Sally* is to go to the personnel office at the entrance of the building.

Times and dress

Work commences at 8.00 am and finishes at 4.30 pm. *Sally* will be expected to be punctual at all times. Should there be some problem because of illness or other unforeseen problem she should inform the personnel officer of the problem.

Sally will also be expected to wear *appropriate footwear (flat heeled closed shoes with rubber soles) and clothing which will allow her to move about freely. She will be given a uniform to wear when she is in the factory.*

Evaluation

Sally will be evaluated on the following aspects:

- punctuality
- dress
- co-operation
- responsibility
- willingness to learn
- cleanliness
- suitability for the industry
- *ability to produce a chocolate product*

Contact details

Should you have any further queries or concerns please feel free to contact the school or the personnel officer at the company.

Personnel officer – tel: e-mail:

Career counsellor – tel: e-mail:

Informing other teachers

When we are setting up a program to provide experience in the workplace for students, it is important that we keep other teachers informed of when these placements are going to take place and which students will be involved. General information about a timetable for placements can be given to teachers at the beginning of the year at a general staff meeting or in departmental meetings. More specific information about exact times and the students to be involved can be provided to teachers as the time for placements draws near.

It is especially important for vocational placement co-ordinators and teachers responsible for these courses to make sure that information on student absences during certain times or days is provided to all subject teachers. This will make it easier for students to arrange follow-up activities for those subjects that they miss during their time in the workplace. Making students responsible for reminding their other teachers that they will be away during certain classes is one way to do this. Another way is to have this information included on a vocational placement information sheet that is provided to teachers on a weekly basis.

When teachers are aware of the students who will not be available for classes they are better able to plan their class sessions. This may mean not introducing too much new information during these sessions, or allocating time to work with the students involved at different times during the week. Alternatively they may need to develop some notes for students to work on in their own time. In any case they will need to plan for these absences and help students catch up on any work they have missed.

Dealing with non-participating students

Many schools schedule their general work-experience programs to take place at the same time for all students in certain classes or certain year levels. In schools where work experience is not compulsory there will be students left at school who do not attend these programs. In these cases there will need to be a well-thought-out plan for dealing with these students. First it is important to find out why these students have not opted for a work experience program. If there are legitimate reasons for students not to be involved (e.g. religious issues, health issues etc.) then a program for them needs to be devised.

In some schools there are penalties for non-participation in work experience. These include prevention from taking up leadership positions, attending graduation ceremonies and being involved in special school activities. In this way the school ensures that students know there is a strong commitment to students engaging in a program of workplace learning.

Preparing for placements

Preparing students for placements

Once placements have been set up it is important to provide students with some pre-placement training. This should include discussing with students the objectives of the placement, and what students need to do to make sure they meet objectives. It also includes discussing with students:

- the expectations of employers
- the routines of going to work
- appropriate dress
- appropriate communication and interpersonal skills
- occupational health and safety
- sexual harrassment issues
- the need to create a good impression

There may also be cases where students can be given some experience in handling unfamiliar equipment so that everything is not all new to them when they arrive in the workplace. Although providing this experience for students may shorten the amount of time they take to learn to operate the equipment in the workplace, we must also keep in mind that employers have their own particular ways of doing things. It is important that teachers remind students that they must do things in the workplace in the way the employer wants them done.

Preparing workplace supervisors

One recurring problem identified by substantial numbers of workplace supervisors was that they have not had the assistance from schools to prepare them for their roles in providing appropriate training for students. In fact in a survey of almost three hundred supervisors who had provided work experience or vocational placements for students over 80 per cent reported having received little or no assistance (Misko 1998).

In general supervisors believed that they had the skills to train students to fit into the workplace and to develop specific technical skills. What they believed they lacked was enough information on what the program was trying to achieve, and information on the students that were coming into their companies. Some employers training large numbers of students would like to receive enough copies of assessment and recording materials so that they do not have to duplicate these themselves.

Although supervisors will know successful performance of a skill when they see it, they may need to be helped to understand how a particular school

would like this performance recorded. This means that schools need to allocate resources to allow teachers responsible for placement programs to visit employers prior to the commencement of any placement program to provide them with the necessary skills to complete assessments and evaluation forms in the way that the school prefers.

Employers may also need to be reminded about the need to ensure the occupational health and safety of the students and to protect students from any workplace harassment problems. This includes issues of discrimination and sexual harassment. Above all they need to be assured of the insurance cover available to students.

It is also important for teachers or vocational co-ordinators to meet with employers and establish some guidelines for dealing with issues such as consistent absence, punctuality problems, inability to get on with workmates, or unwillingness to respect the norms of the workplace. This will let employers know that school personnel are available to provide them with support when things go wrong. It can also help maintain the employer as a willing host for future placements.

Preparing teachers and co-ordinators

Teachers responsible for vocational placement programs are generally more likely to receive some sort of training than are teachers responsible for co-ordinating work experience programs. Career advisers attend formal careers counselling courses. Most teachers who co-ordinate work experience programs do not receive any training.

Preparing teachers for their roles is crucial to the operation of an effective placement program whether they are general work experience programs or specific vocational placements. It indicates that the school is serious about placement programs and regards these as part of the mainstream curriculum. In addition it gives teachers the skills they require for interacting with employers, students and parents.

Workshops for teachers and co-ordinators

In order to prepare teachers and co-ordinators for their roles we should understand the nature of the tasks that they will be expected to perform. One of the most important tasks for a co-ordinator of any type of placement program is to be able to develop networks with employers. As well as improving their understanding of local industries, it will help them to find placements for students. It will also make it easier for them to obtain employment agreement on the training and assessment activities they would like employers to undertake.

Teachers and co-ordinators also need to be able to develop effective systems for monitoring the work of students in workplaces. This means that they will need to learn about different ways of recording what students have achieved, and appropriate methods of assessing competence. They will also need to be aware of what to say and do when visiting students in workplaces, negotiating with employers, and dealing with students and employers should conflicts arise.

One way to provide this training is to implement a series of workshops that deal with these issues. Orientation workshops provide teachers and co-ordinators with opportunities for learning about successful mechanisms for:

- creating networks with employers
- liaising with employers to maintain these networks
- setting up placements
- developing evaluation forms for work experience placements
- developing log books for industry-specific placements
- promoting placement programs to students and their parents
- monitoring student placements
- counselling students and employers

Attendance at an orientation workshop is followed by regular attendance at special teacher and co-ordinator meetings held at least twice during the year. Here participants could share their experiences with their peers on a regular basis and learn about changes in government policy. In addition these forums could provide an opportunity for teachers and co-ordinators to meet with employers and to discuss what has gone well and what improvements are needed.

Implementing the training

Before we expect a student to learn a concept or a skill, whether it be in the workplace or in the class room, we must explain to them why it is an important thing to know or do. For example, if we would like students to understand a concept like effective customer service and to learn effective customer service skills, we will need to explain to them that the survival and success of the company depends on its ability to keep its customers happy and to continue to meet their expectations.

Once students have been told of the importance of these skills, it is essential for students to see practical examples of them and be given opportunities to practise them. In our customer service example this may mean spending some time observing experienced workers in their dealings with customers before practising these skills for short periods. In this way students get to see the actions required, and hear the words that are used before attempting the same skills themselves. At the same time other workers are in a position to give them feedback on what they have done well and what needs to be improved.

In providing students with necessary feedback, supervisors or workers responsible for teaching the student new skills or knowledge, should provide students with a demonstration of the correct way to perform a skill, and a description of the knowledge that is required. Above all students must be given ample opportunities to practise these skills. Practice is an important method for developing expertise.

Monitoring student performance

Visiting students in the workplace

When we talk about monitoring student performance we mean the regular overseeing of how the student is going. In the workplace this is done by workplace supervisors or other workers charged with supervising the student. However, the school also needs to be involved in this supervision. This is generally done by teachers responsible for work experience, vocational placement co-ordinators or teachers of industry-specific courses visiting students in workplaces on a regular basis. A common complaint by students is that these visits do not occur frequently enough.

There are a number of benefits for students to be visited in the workplace by their teachers. It signals to them that they belong to the school community whether or not they are in school at the time. It also allows them to discuss any personal problems they may be experiencing at the workplace. Another benefit for students is that they get to show teachers how they perform outside the classroom.

Teachers also benefit from these regular workplace visits by experiencing first hand what different workplaces are like. They get to observe students interacting with other workers in a team situation. They get to evaluate the nature of the training that students receive and use this information for setting up further placements. They are also in a better position to counsel students who are having problems, and discuss these with workplace supervisors.

Ideally teachers should visit the student at least twice during the placement. The first visit should take place early on. This allows the teacher to meet the workplace supervisor and provide moral support to the student. If there is a drastic mismatch between what the student is expected to do and what the workplace can offer, then the teacher is in a position to suggest a transfer to a different section of the organisation or to another company. The second visit should take place half-way through the placement. This allows the teacher to discuss student progress and to provide any advice where it is required. It will also signal to the student that the school is interested in his/her progress and takes the workplace training seriously. A final visit is only necessary if the teacher is involved in the workplace assessment process.

Assessing student performance

Once students have been given adequate training and opportunity to perform a skill or learn a particular piece of knowledge, they are ready to be assessed. Skills assessments should be conducted in the workplace by the workplace supervisor. This has the advantage of providing a realistic environment in which students may demonstrate skills and helps provide a more accurate assessment of performance.

The assessment of student performance is guided by the objectives of the placement program. These objectives can be used to develop specific assessment events to gather information about students' skills or understanding.

In conducting an assessment of student performance the assessor needs to make sure that the student has had ample notice of when the assessment is going to take place and has had adequate opportunity to practise the skill under question. The assessor also needs to make sure that the student has understood exactly what is wanted, and has the necessary time and equipment required to perform the assessment. This will help the assessor to obtain a valid indication of what the student is able to do. However the assessor needs to be sure that the assessment event is reliable. This means that it will provide the same results when it is repeated on a number of occasions. Valid and reliable assessments are integral to the success of any system of evaluating the performance of students.

Observations

Not all assessments require the performance of a certain skill or competency at a particular time. There are also assessments which are based on daily observations of students' attitudes and specific work habits. These may be used to gather information on students' attitude to work, their ability and willingness to learn and take initiative, their dress and punctuality, and their interpersonal skills.

If assessments are to be based on daily observations, students should be given guidelines and examples of how best to demonstrate these attributes in the workplace before the observation process takes place. It is also important that students are informed that these observations will be made daily. This information can then be provided to students during their first two days at the workplace during which no observations should take place, or prior to the placement taking place.

Reporting on student performance

The recording and reporting of student performance in the workplace is essential to the success of any assessment process and placement program. It shows students and employers that the school considers the experience to be important and that it is committed to monitoring their performance.

When we develop a system for recording performance and reporting outcomes of this performance we need to relate it to the objectives of the program. These objectives form the basis of any checklists or evaluation forms. In developing these checklists or forms it is important to use language that is easy to understand. It is also important that the forms be organised in a straightforward way for ease of completion. Items should only relate to one specific outcome at a time. They should provide an opportunity for the employer to indicate how well this has been achieved, as well as to make a comment. The following example illustrates what we mean.

Sally Smith is going to attend a placement at the Chocolate Box Factory. One of the objectives of Sally's placement program is for Sally to develop punctuality skills. This means that Sally needs to arrive at work on time, and after breaks. Another objective is for Sally to develop skills of working with other people. This means that she will need to be able to show that she can take instructions when required, and provide assistance when necessary. Examples of the items used to measure this performance are included in the following sample evaluation.

Evergreen High School						
Evaluation Form						
Sally Smith						
Instructions: Please complete each item by placing a cross (X) in the column which shows the student has performed each component of the objective. Only enter one (X) for each separate item. You may add more information by adding a comment next to any item in the comments column.						
Objective 1: To develop punctuality skills						
	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
Arrives on time to start work						
Arrives on time to start work after morning tea breaks						
Arrives on time to start work after afternoon tea breaks						
Objective 2: To develop skills of working in a team						
	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
Helps workmates set up equipment for the day's work						
Helps workmates tidy up at the end of the day's work						
Is willing to help out when required						
Is courteous in dealing with other workers						
Is courteous in dealing with supervisors						

You notice from this example that there is only one thing to record and report on in each item. This helps the workplace supervisor to focus on each aspect of Sally's performance separately. The rating scale allows the workplace supervisor to indicate whether Sally has always done what she has been required to do, or whether it has only happened on a few occasions.

If Sally has been punctual every day and after every break, and she has operated as an effective team player we would expect a (X) next to each item in the first column for objective 1. If Sally has always been courteous in dealing with the supervisor but only sometimes courteous in dealing with other workers, then we would expect a (X) in the first column next to the item dealing with the supervisor and a (X) in the third column dealing with other workers. A sample of the completed evaluation form appears below.

Evergreen High School						
Evaluation Form						
Sally Smith						
Instructions: Please complete each item by placing a cross (X) in the column which shows the student has performed each component of the objective. Only enter one (X) for each separate item. You may add more information by adding a comment next to any item in the comments column.						
Objective 1: To develop punctuality skills						
	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
Arrives on time to start work in the morning	X					
Arrives on time to start work after morning tea breaks	X					
Arrives on time to start work after afternoon tea breaks	X					
Objective 2: To develop skills of working in a team						
	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
Helps workmates set up equipment for the day's work	X					Is very helpful
Helps workmates tidy up at the end of the day's work	X					Is very organised
Is willing to help out when required	X					Does not have to be asked
Is courteous in dealing with other workers			X			Sally is not always polite to others
Is courteous in dealing with supervisors	X					

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Involving students in the evaluation process

Not all components of the assessment and recording system need to be carried out by workplace supervisors or teachers. Students can also be involved in assessing their own performance. This can happen before an assessment conducted by the supervisor takes place. It can help the student to focus on those skills or knowledge that they need to practise before they perform an assessment activity in front of a supervisor.

Students can also be involved in rating themselves on a checklist similar to the one used by the workplace supervisor. In doing so it allows students to compare their self-ratings with the supervisors' ratings. Any disagreements can then be discussed with supervisors at the completion of the placement.

In addition students can provide qualitative comments next to the ratings or any supervisor comments. These ratings can relate to the reasons for their inability to do certain activities, their health or any distractions they experienced.

Follow-up activities

When we have been engaged in a new activity we generally like to discuss what happened or reflect on what we did. For example, when we take an overseas trip we want to discuss the places we saw, the people we met and the things we did with our families and friends when we return. Some of us like to share these experiences by showing the pictures or videos of the places we have visited.

When students are involved in a new activity like going into an enterprise for work experience or vocational placements, they too may want to share their experiences when it is over. Follow-up activities can add value to the placement program. They enable students to review their experience with others, and provide valuable information as to the suitability of the enterprise for future placements.

The Misko (1998) survey found that the most common follow-up activity for students in both work experience and vocational placements was to write a report on what they have experienced. The next most common follow-up activity was class discussion. Another common follow-up activity is for students to make a presentation about their placement. Although all of these exercises may help students to review and evaluate their placement experiences, we must be careful not to turn the follow-up activity into a major academic exercise. It is far better for students to have a relaxed discussion with teachers and other students about what went well and what did not work well in their placements.

If teachers want students to provide a written review of what happened in the workplace then it may be more valuable to ask students to prepare a daily journal during their time at the workplace. This journal would be written up each night after work and would be used for recording the things students learnt during the day. Alternatively teachers may want students to write down one good thing that happened to them during the day and one problem that they encountered. These experiences can also be used to provide topics of discussion in follow-up activities.

Evaluating the placements

Once we have let a program run its course it is time for evaluation. In evaluating any program data are gathered on whether the program has achieved its purpose. These are called measures of effectiveness. We also gather data to help us estimate how much the program has cost. We have already found that when we set up a learning program we need to be specific about the goals, objectives and the learning outcomes to be achieved in the program. We also need to be specific about the budget. This helps in the quest for effectiveness and efficiency measures during the evaluation process.

Making decisions about the extent to which a program has been effective can be aided by an examination of the results of student assessments and evaluations and information from all participants. The results of student assessments can be obtained from the evaluation forms or student log books completed by employers or teachers. Other information can be collected through questionnaire surveys, telephone surveys and face-to-face interviews with students, employers and teachers or co-ordinators. These are sometimes referred to as the measures that will be used to evaluate the program.

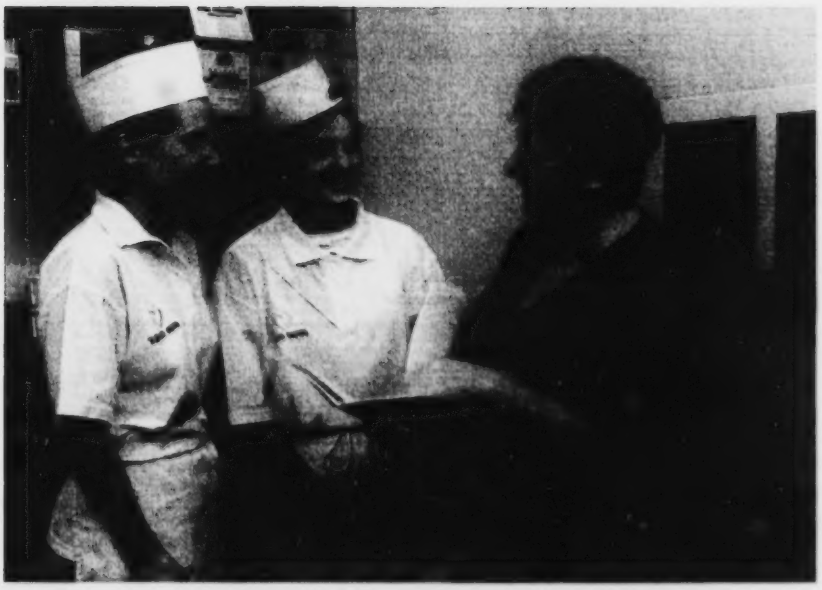
As well as identifying these measures it will be necessary to define the standard for evaluation. The standard is the level used to see how results compare with an absolute standard or how they compare with the results obtained in previous years.

A straightforward process for evaluating placements

Any method for evaluating placements should be simple and straightforward to use. It should also not be time consuming. One reason for this is that it needs to be conducted by teachers whose time is limited and often consumed by other school responsibilities. Another reason is that the results of the evaluation can be communicated in an easy-to-understand form to students, employers and parents. Some schools have combined a series of minor and major evaluations to evaluate their school programs. Such systems can also be used to evaluate a program of work experience and vocational placements. The way this system works is for a minor evaluation to be alternated with a major evaluation. Minor evaluations are held every three years, major evaluations are held every five years. This sequence is especially advantageous for new placement programs. It allows any difficulties to be ironed out before any major decisions are made. For programs which have been going for a while, it might be better to start the cycle with a major evaluation.

The minor evaluation

The minor evaluation comprises a brief survey of participants on what went well, what did not go so well, and suggestions for improvement. This should not be too time consuming. The work experience or vocational placement co-ordinators are in the best position to carry out the evaluation. They already have established means for contacting employers and students and should have time allocated to writing up an evaluation report. The evaluation report should be brief and preferably written on one page. A sample evaluation report of a typical work experience placement program would look like the sample on the next page. It is an adaptation of a model provided by Caldwell and Spinks (1988) in *The self-managing school*.



Sample Minor Evaluation Report

Report of Minor Evaluation for Evergreen High School Work Experience Program

Evaluation report for 1999

This evaluation report is based on information provided by participating years 11 and 12 students, employers, teachers and parents. It should be read in conjunction with the school policy on work experience placements for years 11 and 12 students.

Indicators of success	Areas of concern
1. Teachers involved in the program believe that being involved in the placements has allowed them to improve their knowledge of what goes on in specific industries.	1. There has been insufficient time for teachers to make two visits to all students in the workplace.
2. Employers believe that they have benefitted from having students in the workplace. They have been able to streamline some processes as a result of having to develop effective training for students. They have also been able to develop their staff by involving them in the training process.	2. Employers believe that not all skills can be practised, or tasks completed in the time allocated. They have also had some problems in completing evaluation forms.
3. Students have found the placements to be rewarding and fun. They developed their understanding of specific industries and have a better understanding of what careers they would like to follow.	3. Students complain of being too tired at night to complete daily journals. They also complain of not having enough prior warning of all the areas in which they were to be evaluated. Some students in the professions complain about not being given enough profession-related activities.
4. Parents have indicated that their children have displayed increased maturity and responsibility as a result of being involved in work placements.	4. Not all parents received the parent information sheet which indicated what students were to wear and the times that they needed to be at work.

Comments and recommendations

1. There is a need to review the staffing requirements for work experience programs to ensure that adequate monitoring of students through teacher visits to the workplace can take place.

2. There is a need to make sure that objectives of work experience programs are realistic for the time provided.

3. There is a need to provide follow-up activities for students that can be realistically achieved after a day at the workplace. There is a need to provide adequate and explicit information to students on the areas in which they will be evaluated in the workplace. Teachers and employers in the professions should spend time identifying the types of professional activities which would be suitable for involving students.

4. There is a need to review the process for communicating information on placement requirements to parents.

The major evaluation

The major evaluation looks at each component of the program in much more detail. The evaluation report is similarly brief but it would be more detailed than the minor evaluation. A sample major evaluation process is provided below. It is also an adaptation of a model provided by Caldwell and Spinks (1988).

Sample Major Evaluation Report

Report of Major Evaluation for Evergreen High School Work Experience Program

Introduction

This year the number of staff involved in visiting students in workplaces was increased to include 25 teachers. This represented 10 more teachers than were involved in the previous year.

In addition the number of days allocated to work experience was increased to seven. This is an increase of two days from the previous year.

Teachers conducting this evaluation drew their information from student work experience log books, and questionnaire surveys of students, employers and parents. In addition focus groups of employers, students and parents were held.

The findings of this evaluation are detailed below.

Successful outcomes of the program

1. An examination of employer ratings and comments on student performance has shown that well over three-quarters of students involved in work experience displayed adequate or more than adequate skills and work habits. The breakdown of the results for each learning outcome is presented in the following table.

Employer assessments of students in work experience programs based on evaluations in student log books (%)

	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
The student demonstrated punctuality skills	86	12	2			
The student demonstrated skills of getting on with others	80	12	8			
The student demonstrated an understanding of the industry	77	15	6	2		
The student was able to perform industry-specific skills	76	12	8	4		
The student was eager to learn	77	13	7	3		
The student was eager to work	80	2	10	8		

2. Teachers generally believe that the experience helps students to understand what it is like to go to work and what it is like to work in a team situation. Teachers believe that students in the retail industry have developed a better understanding of the importance of customer relations and improved their skills in communicating with customers.

3. Over 80 per cent of students believe that the experience was worthwhile. Of these almost all enjoyed the opportunity to learn new skills, operate machinery and work with staff. Almost all were given a positive reference and about a third were offered casual holiday positions if they wanted them.

4. Every parent was in favour of continuing work experience placement programs. They especially approved of the information sheet that told them what was expected in the program.

Inadequacies and problem areas

1. Although many of the complaints relating to adequate staffing were addressed as a result of the minor evaluation, there are still some concerns that some students are not receiving at least two visits from teachers during their work experience. There are also concerns about the time it takes teachers to prepare information sheets for employers and parents, and negotiate placements with employers.

2. Employers continue to find the evaluation forms to be too lengthy. They believe that some of the items could be left out. Employers in large companies would also like schools to provide them with enough evaluation forms so that time is not spent in duplicating and distributing forms. Employers would like to have more information on the types of students that will be coming into the workplace. This means information on the subjects students are undertaking, their year levels at school and any special medical condition that they should be made aware of.

3. Students are still displaying high levels of tiredness after a day in the workplace.

Summary and recommendations

The work placement program continues to be effective in terms of what students learn about the workplace and the skills they develop. However there are still some issues about support staff for teachers, the development of adequate assessment materials and the issue of student fatigue that need to be addressed.

It is recommended that:

1. The process that the school has adopted for planning, organising and evaluating placements should be continued. It is also recommended that teachers receive support for administrative duties connected to preparing materials and negotiating placements.

2. An investigation into the reasons for students not being visited at least two times during the work experience needs to be mounted. Information should be gathered from those students who were not visited at least twice as well as from those teachers who were supposed to have visited.

3. Teachers review the nature of the items included for assessment in the work experience log books and evaluation forms where these are used instead of log books.

4. The responsibility for conducting minor and major evaluations should be rostered so that all teachers involved in the program get an opportunity to conduct the evaluation at some time.

Prepared by the Evaluation Team for Work Placement Programs for years 11 and 12.

Although we have limited sample evaluation reports to a work experience program, the same principles apply for a vocational placement program. For a vocational placement program there will be more information-specific skills.

Once we have carried out the evaluation we have completed the cycle and are ready to start again.

A model for implementing work experience and vocational placement programs

This model is based on a continuous cycle of needs identification, goal and objective setting, implementation, and evaluation.

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Summary

The aim of this booklet is to provide assistance to those responsible for organising industry placements for students. It has outlined a set of guidelines for the implementation of programs. These guidelines are in part based on findings from studies which evaluate work experience programs, and surveys of the views of students, employers and teachers. Guidelines are also based on processes used in schools and recommended by experts in educational administration.

It is important, however, to understand that these guidelines only represent one approach to the development and organisation of work experience programs. Schools may customise such guidelines to suit local conditions.

References & annotated bibliography

Ainley, J & Fleming, M 1997, *School industry programs: National survey 1996*, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, Sydney.
This report presents the findings of the 1996 national survey of school industry programs. In addition to all the areas covered by the previous report it also draws comparisons between the 1996 survey and the 1995 survey. Questionnaires are also included.

Ainley, J & Fleming, M 1996, *School industry programs: National survey 1995*, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, Sydney.
This report presents the findings of a 1995 national survey of the extent and characteristics of school industry programs in senior secondary schools. It outlines differences in provision among States, and school sectors. Also included are the nature of student participation in programs, workplace training, industry coverage, and program management. Questionnaires are also included.

Ainley, J & Fleming, M 1995, *School–industry programs: National survey 1994*, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, Sydney.
This report focusses on the type of linkage between school and industry which is referred to as a school–industry program; that is, a program of workplace-based learning linked to accreditation and recognition as an integral part of upper secondary education. The report is based on a survey of the extent and characteristics of school–industry programs in the senior years of secondary schools across Australia. Appended are the questionnaires used.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Training Advisory Committee (ATSIPTAC) 1998, 'Building pathways: School–industry work placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students—an ATSIPTAC discussion paper', Broadmeadows, Victoria.
This paper identifies the range of significant factors that hamper Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from achieving successful outcomes in high school and continue to disadvantage them in the workplace.

Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) 1997, *ASTF guide to VET*, ASTF, Sydney.
This guide is designed to help school–industry co-ordinators to find all the information they need to perform their roles successfully. The guide provides introductory information on vocational education and training (VET) and the role of school–industry programs.

ASTF 1998, *Program co-ordinators directory*, 2nd edn, ASTF, Sydney.
In this issue of the *Program co-ordinators directory* of the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation details of each school–industry training program are provided. This includes contact person and phone/fax numbers, schools involved, industries involved, and a brief description of each program. Many program co-ordinators have now organised Internet access, so where appropriate, program website addresses and email addresses are also included.

Bell, C & Wilson, J 1998, 'Issues and suggestions for assessment of practical placements', Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra.
This paper identifies some of the issues confronted by students and teachers in the assessment of practical placements in industry.

Caldwell, B J & Spinks, J 1988, *The self-managing school*, The Falmer Press.
This book is especially useful for administrators in schools interested in developing policies and programs to suit local conditions. It provides a rationale for having a consultative and systematic approach to policy-making and to the development of school programs. It also provides clear and specific guidelines for determining needs, setting goals and objectives, and implementing and evaluating programs.

Carlin, P & St Leger, P 1998, *MOSEDG School to Industry Program: Building a workplace learning community*, Department of Vocational Education and Training, Hawthorn, Victoria.
This report provides strong evidence that the Moorabbin Oakleigh Springvale Employment Development Group (MOSEDG) School to Industry Program is making a significant contribution to strengthening the links between schools and workplaces, and as a consequence improving teachers' and students' knowledge of the nature and requirements of modern workplaces.

Cummings, J & Carbine, B 1997, *Reforming schools through workplace learning*, National Schools Networks, Ryde, New South Wales.
This book of case studies identifies the benefits perceived by students, teachers and employers in having secondary school students involved in highly structured work placements.

DEET (Department of Employment, Education and Training) 1995, *Training in transition: Evaluation of the AVTS pilot phase 1993 and 1994*, AGPS, Canberra.
The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System (AVCTS) is an attempt to reform the entry-level training system. It is an industry-driven system of training which provides young people in schools the opportunity to obtain a vocational education certificate. This report describes the broad acceptance of the AVCTS as well as many of the concerns about its implementation. Three models of AVCTS expansion are presented.

Dusseldorp Skills Forum 1997, *School–industry programs: Some comparisons between States and Territories*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney.
This report looks at differences in the character and quality of school–industry programs involving year 11 and 12 students in periods of learning in the workplace. The report first outlines a range of international and Australian evidence on measures of good practice and on indicators of quality in the delivery of programs. It then reviews the data, discusses what accounts for the differences between the States, and concludes with suggestions intended to be a starting point for the establishment of minimum quality criteria for school vocational education courses and programs.

Evans, G & Poole, M E 1992, 'Experiencing work: Bridges for adulthood', in *Education at work*, ed. M. Poole, Australian Council for Educational Research.
This article reports on the findings of a 1988 study of changes in student attitudes and cognitive skills which were derived from work experience.

Fairbairn, K, Colvin, D, Catts, R, Rostedt, M & Burvill, S 1997, *Assessing and reporting the key competencies performances of students of post-compulsory age through 'work experience'*, Vocational Education and Training Research Institute, Queensland Department of Education, Brisbane.
This publication reports on a study investigating the assessment and reporting of key competencies for work experience students. Also included are sample assessment and reporting instruments.

Flowerday, L 1996, *ASTF supporting industry and school partnerships in Western Australia*, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, West Perth.
This document has information about the Course in Workplace Training, Category 1, designed to help workplace supervisors of secondary students participating in structured school–workplace programs. The document includes an annotated list of resources and information available from ASTF.

Gordon-Smith, P, Hoggard, L & Spark, C 1997, *Making learning real: An investigation into unpaid workplacements*, Technical and Further Education Commission, Centre for Vocational Assessment Research, Sydney.
This study describes and analyses the operation of unpaid work placements in order to identify features of good practice from a literature review and from current operations involving TAFE NSW; and provides guidance on ways educational providers and employers can improve learning.

Ministerial Review of Work Experience Committee 1988, *Ministerial Review of work experience*, Support and Production Centre, Ministry of Education, School Division, Melbourne.
This report provides information on the benefits that students derive from work experience programs. It also examines some concerns raised by employers.

Misko, J 1998, *School students in workplaces: What are the benefits?*, NCVER, Adelaide.
This publication reports on a project that aimed to explore the assumptions which underlie the thinking about work experience and vocational placements as described in the literature and to document the extent to which these assumptions are warranted by the available evidence. Secondary aims were to examine the benefits derived by students and employers from work experience/vocational placement programs and to draw out some major implications for policy. The findings are based on questionnaire surveys of 2285 students, 41 teachers responsible for co-ordinating programs, 170 vocational placement co-ordinators, and 292 employers who had been involved in providing these placements.

New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education, Access and Foundation Programs, Educational Services Consortium 1997, *Work placement 8971D*, South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, Granville, NSW.
The resource package consists of the *Host employers booklet* (for use by employers hosting learners enrolled in the TAFE NSW module 8971D 'Work placement') which outlines the roles and responsibilities of employers hosting learners and suggests strategies for making sure the module is delivered effectively and the *Learners' booklet* (for students enrolled in the module) which sets out the roles and responsibilities of students, the supervision and support students should expect, and the assessment criterion.

Straton, R G & Murray, M M 1984, *Work experience in Australian secondary schools*, Department of Education and Youth Affairs, AGPS, Canberra.
This publication reports on findings from case studies of the benefits of work experience programs in Tasmania and Western Australia. A number of concerns about the integration of the programs into the mainstream school curriculum are also raised.

Transition Education Advisory Committee 1983, *Innovative work education project report*, Transition Education Advisory Committee, Melbourne.
This report provides information on different approaches to implementing work experience in seven Victorian schools. It examines the benefits of having both a classroom and workplace focus to any work experience program.

Teese, R, Davies, M & Ryan, C 1997, *Work placement experience: The student perspective*, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.
This report presents results of a survey of work placement experiences of 5879 year 12 students in most States or Territories across Australia. The focus of this study is on student perceptions of the value and quality of their work placements.

***Vocal: Australian Journal of Vocational Education and Training in Schools*, 1998, ed. Mike Frost, Vocational Education and Training Network, Rosny Park, Tasmania.**
This new national journal has a particular focus on the provision of vocational education and training in schools. It is dedicated to providing a synthesis of that which is topical, current and relevant to the VET-in-schools community. All articles in this issue provide information on school industry programs and how they are perceived.

Western Australia Department of Training 1997, *VET in schools*, WA Department of Training, Perth, Western Australia.
The Western Australian approach to vocational education and training in schools is outlined. Existing credit transfer arrangements allow for the expansion of VET in schools within the framework of the new apprenticeship system.

Other titles relating to VET and schools

Australian VET statistics 1998: school students undertaking VET—at a glance, NCVER

Early school leavers and VET: Research at a glance, NCVER

Early school leavers at risk, John McIntyre, John Freeland, Bernice Melville, Cristina Schwenke

School students in the workplace: What are the benefits? Josie Misko

Transition pathways: What happens to young people when they leave schools, Josie Misko

Teaching and learning in initial VET, Tony Anderson

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The *Getting to grips with* . . . series has been written for the general reader who wants to understand important trends in vocational education and training.

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About the author

Josie Misko is a research fellow at NCVER and has extensive experience in the area of VET research and evaluation.

She has written and researched in the areas of flexible delivery, student outcomes, transfer of knowledge, work experience, workplace training and assessment, VET in secondary schools, competency-based training and assessment processes, and transition pathways.

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